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ABSTRACT

Curricular experiences in a bilingual/multicultural teacher education program should be designed around the experiential and conceptual backgrounds of multiethnic children and youth. The concepts, generalizations, content, language patterns, values, attitudes, habits, and cultural heritage familiar to all racial and cultural groups should constitute the core of an effective program. This allows the prospective teacher to acquire the competencies needed to design and implement bilingual cross-cultural programs, function effectively in ethnically diverse classrooms, and carry out "culture context teaching." Every aspect of a multicultural teacher education program (general education, area of specialization, and professional education) should be designed to help the teacher acquire a realistic understanding of a culturally diverse society and assist culturally diverse children in coping with the persistent problems of everyday living. (MSE)

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Major Guidelines to Be Followed in Developing a Successful Bilingual/Multicultural Teacher Education Program

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Anne Richardson Gayles

Curricular experiences in a bilingual multicultural teacher education program should be designed around the experiential and conceptual backgrounds of multiethnic children and youth. The concepts, generalizations, content, language patterns, values, attitudes, habits, and cultural heritages that are familiar to all racial and cultural groups should constitute the core of an effective bilingual multicultural teacher education program so that the prospective teacher will acquire the competencies needed to design and implement bilingual cross-cultural programs, function effectively in ethnically pluralistic classrooms, and carry out the process of "culture context teaching," in which (1) the philosophy of cultural pluralism is practiced, (2) culturally derived teaching competencies are used in a personalized process of teaching and learning, (3) selected teaching concepts, strategies and instructional resources are culturally and linguistically appropriate for multicultural children and youth, and (4) recognition of language as a special dimension in the education of culturally and linguistically different children is of prime importance.

Every aspect of a multicultural teacher education program—general education, area of specialization, and profes-

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sional education—should be designed to help the prospective teacher acquire a realistic understanding of a culturally diverse society, to assist multicultural children to cope with the persistent problems of everyday living, and to help the prospective teacher acquire competencies needed by all teachers in a culturally diverse society, and competencies needed by teachers who teach culturally different children and youth.

Educating teachers to perform successfully in a multicultural society is truly a professional challenge. The implementation of a functional multicultural teacher education program is the most demanding single obligation in teacher education today. Fortunately, there is a growing consciousness that changes must be made to prepare prospective teachers for effective instruction of pupils from diverse racial, social, religious, and cultural backgrounds.

Clearly, prospective teachers must become aware of the cultural pluralism of American society, and public education must provide an opportunity for all pupils to prepare themselves to live effectively in such a society. There is, therefore, a need for multicultural teacher education programs that will enable prospective teachers to: (a) understand their own and their pupils' environment and culture; (b) understand their own and their pupils' anxieties, insecurities, attitudes and prejudices; and (c) develop teaching skills consistent with the accepted purposes of education for a multicultural society.

Teacher training programs must prepare the prospective teacher to design and implement, with the cooperation of multicultural populations, a multicultural curriculum that will enable learners in a culturally diverse society to cope with the persistent life situations facing them. Therefore, competencies and understandings needed by multiethnic pupils as they attempt to deal with the basic problems and situations of everyday living should constitute the core of a curriculum designed to train teachers to function effectively in today's dynamic and complex society of disparate cultures. Banks (1977) wrote that if teacher education programs are to prepare preservice and inservice teachers to function successfully within multicultural classrooms, they must help teachers to acquire: more democratic attitudes and values, a clarified philosophical position related to pluralism, a process of conceptualization of ethnic studies, the ability to view

society from diverse ethnic perspectives, and knowledge of the emerging stages of ethnicity and their curricular and teaching implications.

Hilliard (1974) provided practical recommendations for the preparation of teachers who can function successfully in a culturally heterogeneous environment. He listed the following understandings, skills, and attitudes as essential for teacher effectiveness:

Essential Understandings. Teachers must understand that:

a. The teaching process is always a cross-cultural encounter;
b. The personality, values, and social background of the teacher are critical cultural inputs;
c. All teaching tools are culture bound;
d. The classroom is not a benign context but a potent matrix;
e. The student can be a victim;
f. All minds are equally complex;
g. The poor and racial or ethnic minorities can and actually have been able to learn at the same level as others when the proper environmental support was provided;
h. Teacher expectations are determining factors in building a climate for growth of students;
i. Teachers must understand that learning is related to a sense of power over some of the forces that impinge on our lives; and
j. Teachers must intimately understand the culture of their students.

Essential Skills. Teachers must possess:

a. The ability to communicate with students from other cultures;
b. The ability to diagnose the knowledge and abilities of students from other cultures;
c. Skill in the evaluation of professional literature bearing on multicultural problems;
d. Skill in self-diagnosis;
e. Skill in recognizing cultural equivalencies; and
f. Skill in detecting conscious and unconscious negative signals.

Essential Attitudes. Teachers must have:

a. Freedom from bias and openness to continuing self-examination;

b. A tendency to honor and value cultural alternatives, such as language, beliefs, values, and behaviors; and
c. The belief that a multicultural orientation is beneficial to them personally.

The recommendations of Banks and Hilliard seem to represent a comprehensive listing of competencies essential to the preparation of effective teachers for a multicultural society. Implementation of a program to accommodate these competencies will require significant changes in the academic content and experiences provided for prospective teachers. These changes will affect all facets of the college program and will require the cooperation of a large segment of the academic community. Anything less than a concentrated, committed, and cooperative effort will result in mere academic tinkering with an outmoded and ineffective teacher education program. An adequate program must be designed to provide curricular experiences within the framework discussed in the following sections. That framework encompasses the general education, area of specialization, and professional education components of teacher preparation programs.

GENERAL EDUCATION

The commonly accepted purpose of a general education program is to provide students a broad understanding of humankind's cultural heritage. A program is usually organized to provide broadening experiences in communication skills, sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities. The purpose of these experiences is to provide opportunities for students to develop understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment of contemporary civilization. Such a purpose, if effectively implemented, is consistent with the requirements for competent teachers in multicultural schools.

The general education experiences of prospective teachers should broaden their understanding of the teacher's role in a pluralistic, democratic society, as a citizen and as a teacher of multicultural citizens; help them to acquire the personality traits that are conducive to establishing effective human relations with all racial and ethnic groups; aid them in developing appreciation of people who are different from themselves in cultural, social, religious, economic, and ethnic backgrounds; and help them acquire the moral, ethical, and spiritual principles and resources that are needed for effective participation in a culturally diverse society.

The general education experiences of prospective teachers should help them to communicate their thoughts orally and in writing with enough clarity and logic to be understood by all racial and ethnic groups. It should help prospective teachers understand people as well as their cultures and contributions. Diverse cultural groups should be studied in terms of contributions they have made and are making to world civilizations, American civilization, and the local community.

Although these goals traditionally have been the stated focus of general education programs, too often instruction has degenerated into sterile, academic exercises unrelated to the unsettling events of a contemporary world. If teachers are to be provided an effective foundation for successful classroom functioning, the general education program must provide a basis for a realistic understanding of a culturally diverse society.

THE AREA OF SPECIALIZATION

The area of specialization in a multicultural teacher education program provides intensive study in the academic fields in which prospective teachers hope to teach. Content from academic fields also contributes to the achievement of professional education objectives; disciplines in the academic fields and subjects in professional education have a reciprocal relationship, and both are needed if prospective teachers are to help pupils in multiethnic classrooms deal with the persistent problems of everyday living.

The specialization area provides the teacher with essential instructional content. This content, in some cases, should reinforce the foundational studies of general education. Specializations in social studies and language arts are obvious areas where intensive study will provide a deeper understanding of other cultures and the contributions to civilization made by their members. Similar benefits can be derived from other areas of specialization. For example, a prospective teacher of multiethnic classes in music, art, and foreign languages has an obligation to become familiar with the contributions of various cultures and ethnic groups. Although the physical sciences, mathematics, and other disciplines may not deal *directly* with multicultural content, a prospective teacher must be familiar with contributions of ethnic minorities to the advancement of knowledge in these fields. Although teacher educators may not control either general education courses or areas of specialization, their contribution to

the preparation of multicultural teachers is vital, and a concentrated effort must be made to ensure faculty cooperation for realistic preparation.

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

It is through the professional education sequence that teachers of multicultural children will be trained to use the teaching strategies that are culturally and linguistically suited to their pupils, create and use appropriate instructional materials, and maintain routine classroom discipline while respecting each personality. The professional sequence should focus on content, methodology, and attitudes that will help prospective teachers to understand themselves, multicultural children and youth, and the dynamics of teaching and learning. Thus the professional sequence should contain the psychological, sociological, and skills components that are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Psychoeducational Component

It is obvious that an anxious, insecure teacher is incapable of fulfilling adequately the role of a professional teacher in a multicultural classroom. Competent teachers must be emotionally mature; they must understand their anxieties, insecurities, prejudices, attitudes toward authority, and defense mechanisms. Such knowledge is a prerequisite to understanding pupils and encouraging their growth toward self-understanding. Because teachers are the most important adult identification figures in a child's life, it is probably accurate to say that what a teacher *is* is more important than what a teacher *knows*. Thus one of the major goals of the psychoeducational component is to help prospective teachers discover and discuss unresolved feelings about themselves and their relations with those around them.

A second goal is to provide prospective teachers with information pertaining to the emotional and psychological development of children coming from diverse sociocultural backgrounds. Pupils come to school with personalities, goals, values, social habits, and attitudes formulated as a result of their own peculiar cultural experiences. Each pupil, regardless of his or her ethnic origin, is a unitary, integrating personality seeking to maintain equilibrium; a goal-seeking organism, pursuing purposes in order to satisfy needs; an active, inquisitive individual with a pattern and rhythm of growth peculiar to her or his individuality; and a learner whose educational prescription must provide

freedom to explore, to construct, to question, to differ, to make mistakes, and to develop creative contributions within the limits of democratic controls.

If pupils of diverse cultural and ethnic origins are to grow toward self-understanding, teachers must attempt to promote adjustment patterns that encourage feelings of security in each pupil, that are cognizant of changing needs and social conditions, and that provide an understanding of behavior standards for subgroups in which pupils must function.

Socioeducational component

The responsibility of a multicultural teacher education program to help prospective teachers develop understanding and respect for the cultures of other groups is a complex and demanding task. Curricular experiences should be designed to involve prospective teachers in an education process which will help them to:

—Understand the origin and history of the various social and ethnic groups,
—Conceptualize the impact of varied home, community, and other social forces upon the behavior of the pupil,
—Become acquainted with the specific mores, folkways, customs, and traditions of the various cultural and ethnic groups in America,
—Understand the current values and attitudes of ethnic groups in America,
—Acquire techniques for understanding family and community patterns of social relationships among racial and ethnic groups,
—Make a critical appraisal of the social institutions of groups, and determine the extent to which they can assist with solving problems of segregation, discrimination, prejudice and hostility,
—Recognize the fallacy of intellectual inferiority or superiority of a racial or ethnic group, and
—Overcome cultural and racial stereotypes.

Teachers in multicultural schools need to develop understanding of the culture of their pupils so that they can capitalize on its strengths and avoid competing against its mores and ideals. They should not degrade it, but rather seek to promote understanding. The family background and social class pressures, as well as the

individuality of the learner, must be taken into account. If teachers are to achieve this level of understanding they must participate in community activities, have contact with a wide range of community residents, and engage in other realistic field experiences of this type.

Teaching skills component

The development of teaching skills represents the third major goal in the preparation of teachers for culturally diverse classrooms. Traditional teacher education programs offer a wide variety of courses designed to promote skill in teaching middle-class pupils of the majority culture. This narrow approach to teacher preparation fails to take into account the need for special skills to enable teachers to work effectively with a diverse school population. Two examples will serve to illustrate this point.

First, it is important for a multicultural teacher education program to design curricular experiences that will help the prospective teacher cope with the language problems bilingual children experience. Many school districts have large numbers of parents who speak only a foreign language, and their children must exist in a bilingual environment. Prospective teachers must be taught not to penalize these children for being foreign language speakers; rather, they should be taught how to capitalize on this heritage. Teachers must also realize that just because pupils speak a different language does not necessarily mean that their language is deficient. Prospective teachers should also be required to become familiar with the languages used by the ethnic groups they will encounter.

Second, the prospective teachers must also engage in curricular experiences that would equip them with the appropriate strategies for dealing with the minority children's socially undesirable reaction to persistent feelings of inferiority. They must become familiar with specific techniques for dealing with such behaviors as timidity, bullying, awkwardness, delinquency, envy, domineering behavior, day-dreaming, perfectionism, self-effacement, annoying attention-getting devices, fear of attempting new activities, and pretended ill health. They must become aware that minority children will not exhibit any of these behavior traits consistently, and that often, the discovery of activities in which they can achieve, merit praise, and win recognition is likely to alleviate them markedly.

In view of this need for a broader range of teaching strategies to work effectively with diverse pupil groups, it would seem important for a multicultural teacher education program to focus specific attention on experiences which will enable teachers to:

—Select and use appropriate instruments of communication with individuals and groups. It is imperative for the teacher to understand the language variations of multiethnic learners.

—Use technological resources to promote the fulfillment of the many and varied needs of multiethnic learners.

—Use a variety of instructional procedures. Multiethnic students represent widely different capacities, abilities, and interests that cannot be satisfied through uniform methodology.

—Identify, select, and use a wide variety of instructional materials that are appropriate for the cultural groups involved in terms of interest, levels of complexity, maturity and experience of the students, and individual differences within the group.

—Understand and treat multicultural children as the individuals they are, each with his or her own particular potential and rate of growth, and each with her or his own background, problems, habits, interests, and curiosities. If the important democratic value of respect for personality is to be realized among multiethnic children and youth, the curriculum must reflect these differences among learners.

—Make systematic studies of ethnic learners to discover their differences. From these differences should emerge a flexible curriculum geared to the needs and potentialities of individuals.

—Plan for community involvement. It is essential for families of multiethnic children and youth to be involved in the planning and execution of meaningful multicultural experiences.

—Develop teaching strategies consistent with the psychological, sociological, and philosophical assumptions accepted by the prospective teacher. Unless teachers have a basic conceptual framework from which to develop strategies for teaching children in multicultural settings, their good intentions may come to naught.

The need for a concentrated effort to prepare teachers for multicultural classrooms is crucial. The conceptual framework

outlined in this section offers exciting possibilities for incorporating practices that address children and youth of diverse social and cultural backgrounds. The outline also allows for many of the changes suggested by Stone and De Nevi (1971), in terms of bringing into the schools new instructors, novel community-based instructional resources, new facilities and materials, and new content and methods that will increase the authenticity of the school's coverage of ethnic cultures. The conceptual framework is also consistent with practices of the Cooperative Urban Teacher Education program, which has demonstrated that imaginative changes in teacher education are imperative if a meaningful and dynamic multicultural teacher education program is to emerge (Clothier, 1972).

I should also emphasize that I agree with the philosophy of Grant (1975) that multicultural education is not a catchword for "minority," but rather encompasses all people of the United States, their racial and ethnic differences, their customs, their levels of income, their traditions and beliefs, their languages, and their religious beliefs. Educational institutions must begin to assume responsibility for seeing that teacher education programs reflect the cultural and ethnic pluralism of this nation through their staffing, materials, methods, strategies, resources, and participatory models and practices.

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